

U.S. MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT: BENEFITS TO AMERICAN CITIZENS FROM UN SPECIALIZED AND TECHNICAL AGENCIES



For more than sixty years, U.S. leadership in and engagement with the United Nations has advanced crucial U.S. foreign policy priorities. These include the promotion of global peace and security, the improvement of the human condition, and the elevation of shared norms and values. Without the United Nations, its affiliated agencies, and numerous other international organizations, U.S. influence and initiative in these priority areas would be limited, and U.S. authority on the global stage diminished.

Advantages for Americans

U.S. leadership at the United Nations produces important global outcomes and also results in tangible benefits to American citizens. These include direct economic returns such as the purchase of American goods and services, as well as the employment of American citizens. In addition to its engagement in such well-known UN bodies as the UN Security Council and the World Trade Organization, the United States also benefits from its participation and leadership in less visible UN specialized and technical agencies.

Examples of these benefits include:

Strengthened Aviation Safety

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) promotes safe and secure commercial and cargo air transport for American travelers by establishing global standards for safety, air traffic services, navigation, and communication. ICAO and the United States work together to establish rigorous international standards for traveler identification, cargo security, and border security.

Protected Intellectual Property

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) maintains the global system governing intellectual property rights. U.S. engagement with WIPO ensures that U.S. innovators and entrepreneurs can file for and obtain intellectual property protection outside the United States. U.S. entities submit more than 400,000 patent, copyright, and/or trademark license requests to WIPO in a typical year.

Robust Global Communications

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) establishes and monitors standardized systems for mobile and satellite communication, satellite navigation, and broadcasting around the world. The global economy increasingly depends on this expanding and broadening network of communications technologies. The ITU manages the international agreements which govern the use and evolution of these technologies, ensuring fair and transparent access to those systems for U.S. and other companies and customers.

Expanded Maritime Trade

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) oversees global waterborne trade, which accounts for approximately 90% of all U.S. foreign trade. IMO oversees the industry's regulatory framework, including safety, efficiency, environmental standards, security, and legal issues. IMO treaties, standards, and guidelines apply strict security requirements to foreign vessels entering U.S. ports.

Improved International Mail

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) facilitates postal service across the globe. The organization advises, mediates and coordinates worldwide, and provides technical assistance where needed by offering a network of up-to-date products and services to UPU Member States. The UPU sets the rules for international mail exchanges, and has the international authority to make recommendations to improve quality and service throughout the world.

Cooperation on International Weather

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) coordinates the sharing of weather and related data around the globe. The WMO establishes and maintains common standards and channels for transmitting data; and also tracks and communicates information on weather conditions that cross borders in both regular patterns and unexpected shifts. The WMO also provides a forum for sharing best practices and seeking innovative solutions to short-term and long-term meteorological challenges.